



STATE PARK UPDATE



January, 2003

Crystal Cove State Park - El Morro Mobile Home Park Conversion

Progress:

Since we issued our last update in September 2001 much progress has been made on the El Morro Mobile Home Park Conversion project. The project is now moving into the next phase of design and development. The following are highlights of what has been completed since then.

A public meeting was held in Laguna Beach on November 27th, 2001. Over fifty members of the community met with State Parks staff and design consultants to review project plans. Many of the stakeholders shared their comments with the planning team. On May 7, 2002, State Parks circulated for public comment the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report. Seventeen written comments letters were received, and responses were prepared to each one. The Final Environmental Impact Report was certified and a Final Notice of Determination filed with the State Clearing House on August 13th, 2002. State Parks staff, then, with the assistance of the design consultants presented the preliminary plan drawings to State Public Works Board on September 13, 2002. The State Public Works Board approved the preliminary plans and the next phase of plan development.

In Spring, 2002, State Parks also entered into a Development Agreement with the Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). The purpose of this agreement is to plan, permit, fund and construct those facilities which can be shared or have mutual benefit to both the El Morro Mobile Home Park Conversion and the El Morro Elementary School Expansion projects. This agreement provides for cost sharing and integrated design for connecting park and school facilities to the municipal sewer system as well as for improvements to our common entrance/exit off of Pacific Coast Highway. The agreement will also improve the control and treatment of storm water.

Project Revisions:

Based on public input, State Parks has made several adjustments to the project to further reduce potential impacts from the design approved in the Final Environmental Impact Report. The following is a list of the most significant ones. Some of these are shown on the current site plan attached to this update.

- ☐ Expand the buffer area between El Morro Elementary School and the campground by shifting camp sites further away from the El Morro Elementary School.
- ☐ Increase the height of the boundary berm to improve the physical separation between park and school activities.
- ☐ Remove the pedestrian crossing and intersection signal lights at Pacific Coast Highway near El Morro Creek.
- ☐ Improve beach access through the El Morro Creek tunnel under Pacific Coast Highway by improving ramps and walking surfaces to and from El Morro beach.
- ☐ Develop El Morro Campground Operations Plan which will include guidelines for restricting camp fires during normal school hours.

Next Step:

The Governor's Budget for 2002 includes funding for State Parks to proceed with working drawings and permitting for the project. The Department has begun this phase of the project and continues to anticipate beginning construction and restoration activities in El Morro Canyon in Spring, 2005.

Additionally, State Parks with the assistance from the Attorney General's office will defend the State of California from a suit brought by the El Morro Community Association and the Wise Use Front. This suit challenges the adequacy of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the El Morro Mobile Home Park Conversion Project. State Parks expects that the project will not be delayed by the suit.